

A  
 NARRATIVE  
 Of the Miseries of  
 New-England,  
 By Reason of an  
 Arbitrary Government  
 Erected there.

**T**HAT a Colony so considerable as *New-England* is, should be discouraged, is not for the Honour and Interest of the *English Nation*; in as much as the People there are generally Sober, Industrious, well-Disciplin'd, and apt for Martial Affairs; so that he that is Sovereign of *New-England*, may by means thereof (when he pleaseth) be Emperor of *America*: Nevertheless, the whole *English* Interest in that Territory has been of late in apparent danger of being lost and ruined. and the Miseries of that

People by an Arbitrary Government erected amongst them, have been beyond Expression great.

The original of all which has been the *Quo Warranto's* issued out against their *Charters*; by means whereof they have been deprived of their *antient Rights and Priviledges*.

As for the *Massachusetts Collony* (whose Patent beareth date from the Year 1628.) There was in the year 1683. a *Quo Warranto*; and after that in the Year 1684 a Writ of *Scire Facias* against them, and they were required to make their appearance at *Westminster* in *October*, which they knew nothing of until the month before, so that it was impossible for them to answer at the time appointed; yet Judgment was entred against them.

*Plymouth Collony*, after they had enjoyed their first Government above threescore years, (without so much as a pretence of Misgovernment alledged) had all their Priviledges at once taken from them. There was a *Quo Warranto* against *Connecticut Collony* (whose Charter was granted to them by King *Charles the Second*) only Letters were sent to them in the King's Name, signifying That (in case they did resign their Charter) they should take their Choice of being under *New York* or *Boston*; several of the Magistrates there returned a most humble and supplicatory Answer, praying, That their former Government might still continue; but that if it must be taken from them, they had rather be under *Boston* than *New York*: This was by some at Court interpreted a *Resignation* of their Charter, and a Commission sent to *Sir Edmond Andross*, who went with some armed Attendants to *Hartford* (their principal Town) and declared their Charter and former Government to be void. As for *Road-Island*, they submitted themselves to His Majesties pleasure.

Before these Changes happened, *New-England* was of all the Foreign Plantations (their Enemies themselves being Judges) the most flourishing and desirable.

But

But their *Charters* being all (one way or other) declared to be void and insignificant, it was an easie matter to erect a *French Government* in that part of the King's Dominions, (no doubt intended by the Evil Counsellors) as a *Specimen* of what was designed to be here in *England*, as soon as the times would bear it. Accordingly Sir *Edmond Andross* (a *Genesey* man) was pitched on as a fit Instrument to be made use of; and a most Illegal Commission given him, bearing date *June 3. 1686.* by which he (with four of his Council (perhaps all of them his *absolute Devotees*) are impowred to make Laws and raise Moneys on the Kings Subjects without any Parliament, Assembly, or consent of the People.

It was thought by Wise Men, that the Remembrance of *Dudley* and *Empton*, who were in the days of King *Henry* the Eighth executed for acting by a like Commission; would have deterred them from doing so. But it did not, for Laws are made by a few of them, and indeed what they please; nor are they Printed, as was the Custom in the former Governments, so that the People are at a great loss to know what is Law, and what not. Only one Law they are sensible of, which doth prohibit all Town Meetings, excepting on a certain Day once a Year; whereas the Inhabitants have occasion to meet once a Month, sometimes every Week, for relief of the Poor, or other Town-Affairs. But it is easie to penetrate into the Design of this Law, which was (no Question) to keep them in every Town from complaining to *England*, of the Oppression they are under: And (as Laws have been Established) so Monys have been Raised by the Government in a most Illegal and Arbitrary way, without any consent of the People. Sir *Edmond Andross* caused a Tax to be leavied of a Penny in a Pound on all the Towns then under his Government: And when at *Ipswich* and other places, the *Select Men* (as they are there stiled) voted, That in as much as it was against the Common Priviledges of *Eng-*

*Lib* Subjects, to have money raised without their own Consent in an Assembly or Parliament ; That therefore they would petition the King for liberty of an Assembly before they made any Rates ; the said Sir *Edmond Andross* caused them to be Imprisoned and Fined, some 20 *l.* some 30 *l.* and some 50 *l.* as the Judges, by him instructed, should see meet to determine ; Yea, and several Gentlemen in the Country were Imprisoned and bound to their Good Behaviour, upon meer suspicion, that they did Incourage their Neighbours not to comply with these *Arbitrary Proceedings*. And that so they might be sure to effect their Pernitious Designs, they have caused Juries to be picked of men who are not of the Vicinity, and some of them meer Strangers in the Country, and no Freeholders, which actings are highly Illegal. One of the former Magistrates was committed to Prison without any Crimes laid to his Charge, and there kept half a year without any fault ; and tho he Petitioned for a *Habeas Corpus*, it was denied him ; also inferior Officers have extorted what Fees they please to demand, contrary to all Rules of Reason and Justice. They make poor Widows and Fatherless pay 50 *s.* for the Probate of a Will, which under the former easie Government would not have been a Tenth part so much. Six persons who had been illegally imprisoned, were forced to give the Officers 117 *l.* when as upon Computation, they found that here in *England* their Fees would not have amounted to 10 *l.* in all. And yet these things (tho bad enough) are but a very small part of the misery which that poor People have been groaning under, since they have been governed by a Despotick and Absolute Power. For, their new Masters tell them, that their *Charter* being gone, their Title to their Lands and Estates is gone therewith, and that All is the Kings ; and that They represent the King, and that therefore all persons must take *Patents* from them, and give what they see meet to impose, that so they may enjoy the Houses which

which their own hands have built, and the Lands, which at vast Charges in subduing a Wilderness, they have for many years had a rightful possession of, as ever any People in the World had or can have : Accordingly the Governour ordered the Lands belonging to some in *Charles Town* to be measured out, and given to his Creatures, and *Writs of Intrusion* to be issued out against others : And the *Commons* belonging to several Towns have been given to some of the Governours Council, who begged them, to the impoverishing, if not utter ruining of whole Townships. And when an Island belonging to the Town of *Plimouth* was petitioned away from them by one *Nathaniel Clark* ( whom *Sir Edmund Andross* made his Property ) because the Agents of the said Town obtained a voluntary Subscription to maintain their Title at Law, they were compelled to come not only out of their own County, but Collony, to *Boston*, to answer there as Criminals at the next Assizes, and bound to their good behaviour : The Officers in the mean time extorting 3 *l.* per man for Fees. These were the miserable Effects of *New-England's* being deprived of their *Charters*, and with them of their *English Liberties* : They have not been altogether Negligent, as to endeavours to obtain some relief in their sorrowful Bondage, for several Gentlemen desired *Increase Mather*, the Rector of the Colledge at *Cambridge* in *New-England*, to undertake a Voyage for *England*, to see what might be done for his distressed Country, which motion he complied with ; and in *June* the 1<sup>st</sup>. 1688. he had the favour to wait on the King, and privately to acquaint him with the enslaved and perishing Estate of His Subjects in *New-England*. The King was very gracious and kind in His Expressions ; then, and often after promising to give them ease as to their Complaints and Fears : Amongst other things the said *Mather* caused a Petition from the Town of *Cambridge* in *New-England* to be humbly presented to His Majesty ; which because it doth  
express

express the Deplorable Condition of that People, it shall be here inserted.

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty.

*The Petition and Address of John Gibson, aged about 87. and George Willow, aged about 86. years; as also on the behalf of their Neighbours the Inhabitants of Cambridge in New-England.*

*In most humble wise sheweth,*

“ **T**HAT Your Majesty's good Subjects, with much hard labour and great disbursements, have subdued a Wilderness, built our Houses, and planted Orchards, being encouraged by our indubitable right to the Soil by the Royal Charter granted unto the First Planters, together with our Purchase of the Natives; as also by sundry Letters and Declarations sent to the late Governour and Company, from His late Majesty Your Royal Brother, assuring us of the full enjoyment of our Properties and Possessions, as is more especially contained in the Declaration sent when the *Quo Warranto* was issued out against our Charter.

“ But we are necessitated to make this our Moan and Complaint to Your Excellent Majesty, for that our Title is now questioned to our Lands, by us quietly possessed for near sixty years, and without which we cannot subsist. Our humble Address to our Governour *Sir Edmund Andross*, shewing our just Title, long and peaceable possession, together with our claim of the Benefit of Your Majesty's Letters and Declarations, assuring all Your good Subjects, that they shall not be molested in their Properties and Possessions; not availing.

Royal



" Royal Sir, We ate a poor People, and have no way to  
 " procure money to defend our Cause in the Law ; nor know  
 " we of Friends at Court, and therefore unto Your Royal Ma-  
 " jesty, as the publick Father of all Your Subjects, do we  
 " make this our humble Address for Relief, beseeching Your  
 " Majesty graciously to pass Your Royal Act for the Confir-  
 " mation of Your Majesty's Subjects here in our Possessions  
 " to us derived from our late Governour and Company of  
 " this Your Majesty's Collony : We now humbly cast our  
 " selves, and distressed Condition of our Wives and Chil-  
 " dren, at Your Majesty's Feet, and conclude with the saying  
 " of Queen *Esther*, *If we Perish, we Perish.*

Thus that Petition.

Besides this, *Isaac Mather*, with two *New-England* Gen-  
 tlemen, presented a Petition and humble Proposals to the King,  
 wherein they Prayed that the Right which they had in their  
 Estates before the Government was changed, might be con-  
 firmed ; And that no Laws might be made, or moneys raised,  
 without an Assembly, with sundry other particulars ; which  
 the King referred to a Committee for Foreign Plantations,  
 who ordered them into the hands of the Attorney General to  
 make his Report. The Clerk, *William Blatbwait* sent to the  
 Attorney General a Copy, wherein the Essential Proposal  
 of an Assembly was wholly left out. And being spoke to  
 about it, he said the *Earl of Sunderland* blotted out that  
 with his own hand ; likewise a Solicitor in this Cause related  
 that the said *Earl of Sunderland* affirmed to him, that it was  
 by his advice that the King had given a Commission to Sir  
*Edmund Andross* to raise moneys without an Assembly, and  
 that he knew the King would never consent to an Alterati-  
 on, nor would he propose it to His Majesty. When of late  
 all Charters were restored to *England*, it was highly rational  
 for *New-England* to expect the like ; for if it be an illegal and  
 unjust

unjust thing to deprive good Subjects here of their *Ancient Rights and Liberties*, it cannot be consistent with Justice and Equity to deal so with those that are afar off. Applications therefore were made to the King, and to some Ministers of State. It was urged, that if a Foreign Prince or State should, during the present troubles, send a Frigate to *New-England*, and promise to protect them, as under their former Government, it would be an unconquerable temptation; yet no Restoration of Charters would be granted to *New-England*, which has opened the Eyes of some thinking men: Thus hath *New-England* been dealt with: This hath been, and still is the bleeding state of that Country.

They cannot but hope that *England* will send them speedy Relief; especially considering that through the ill Conduct of their present Rulers, the *French* Indians are (as the last Vessels from thence inform) beginning their cruel Burceries amongst the *English* in those parts; And many have fears that there is a design to deliver that Country into the hands of the *French* King, except his Royal Highness the Prince of *Orange*, whom a Divine Hand has raised up to deliver the Oppressed, shall happily and speedily prevent it.

F I N I S.



